

# Freighters may be held responsible for damage to goods

## Road min okays new carriage norms

**Alok Sharma.** New Delhi

The Union road ministry has cleared new freight carriage rules, which will make transporters liable for damage of goods, a government source said.

"The road ministry has given its nod to the new freight carriage rules. The law ministry will now examine the new rules before they come into implementation," the source said.

According to the new norms, transporters will have to pay 10-12 times the freight cost to the customer in case of any loss or dam-

age of consignment, the source said. This payout should not exceed the cost of the goods.

The source said the government may introduce the freight carriage bill with these new norms in the Budget session of Parliament in February.

Currently, if any consignment is undelivered or damaged in the custody of a private goods transport agent, the customer has to approach the consumer forum if the transporter declines to pay the declared cost of the items.

The new carriage norms also entail an independent third-party



evaluation in case there is a partial damage to the goods in transit, the source said, adding that the cost of such exercise would also be borne by the transporter.

According to the source, the road ministry has recommended that if the non-delivery period of consignment exceeds 90 days from the promised date of delivery, then the cargo is to be deemed as lost.

The new norms also mention that transporters can "charge higher payment for taking higher risk consignment" as per consigner and their agreement, the source said. **NEWS**